what we know from documentary sources of that of Cristofer Colombo, son of the Genoese weaver, with whom he is generally identified.

Spanish scholars (such as Jose M. Erugo, C. Garcia de la Riega, Otero Sanchez, Nicholas Diaz Perez, etc.), in order to vindicate him for their own country, have put forward the hypothesis that he was of Marrano, or crypto-Jewish, extraction, obliged on that account to be secretive as to his origin. Certain it is that the name of Colombo, or Colon, is by no means unknown among Jews; that Christopher left a small legacy to a Jew living by the gate of the Jews' Street in Lisbon; that he shews a particularly strong Biblical influence in his writings; that his somewhat mysterious signature is capable of Hebraic interpretations only slightly more unsatisfactory than those generally current; and that his son states categorically that his father's progenitors were of the royal blood of Jerusalem—a phraseology consistently used by Spanish Jews of the period when they desired to boast their aristocratic origin. "The theory that Columbus was born at Pontevedra . . . cannot lightly be brushed aside," asserts Andre, in his biography. "On the other hand, there is perhaps equal reason for believing him born in Aragon, *the son of converted Jews.*"

Whatever the truth of this may be, it is incontestable that the great explorer had a penchant for Jewish society, and that Jews were intimately associated with his

enterprise from the beginning.

Discouraged by his failure in Portugal, where he had first applied for assistance, Columbus had made his way to Spain. Here, too, he met with rebuff after rebuff. The only persons who took him seriously were a little group, all or nearly all of whom were either Jews or else of Jewish descent—belonging to the group of the so-called